

REMARKS

Applicants express appreciation to the Examiner for indicating that claims 16-22 are allowed and that claims 3-11 and 13 include allowable subject matter.

Claims 1, 2, 12, 14, 15, and 23-29 have been rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Comeau et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,615,740. Applicants note that the Examiner has relied upon set screws 18, in the Comeau reference to represent the release material that Applicants claim. Applicants would like to point out that the release material in the instant application has a different purpose, and has distinct structural requirements with respect to the apparatus as a whole. The release material facilitates release from cement subsequently pumped to the area surrounding the junction. Claim 1 has been amended to clearly require that the release material be exposed to the environment exterior to the sleeve. This will prevent adhesion of the cement to the cover and facilitate release thereof. In distinct contrast, upon a brief perusal of, for example, Fig. 1 of Comeau one will immediately ascertain that the set screws 18 are isolated from environment by O-rings 20 and 22. Since applicants have amended the claims to require exposure to external environment and similarly have made amendments in claims 2 and 23 regarding isolation of the cover provided by the release material, it is clear that the Comeau reference does not sufficiently teach that which is claimed.

Applicants believe that the Examiner will immediately understand the distinction claimed in Applicants' claims, which is anticipated will result in allowance of the application.

In the event the Examiner has any queries regarding the instantly submitted Amendment, Applicants' Attorney respectfully requests the courtesy of a telephone conference to discuss any matters in need of attention.

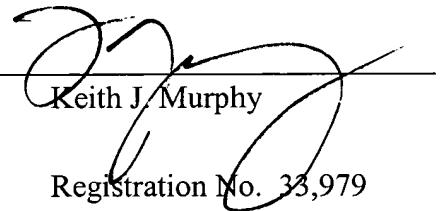
Applicants believe that all pending claims in the instant application are now in condition for allowance which action is earnestly solicited.

If there are any additional charges with respect to this Response or otherwise, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 06-1130 maintained by the Applicants' Attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,
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